## Prelude

She grabbed my hand—out of nowhere, with
like come rishi, why are you latee! —and pul
toward the dingy little printout shop behind t
It smelled like old ink and new panic. Her fin
warm. Mine were cold, slightly clammy, and
unprepared.

"Come fast, or we'll miss the shop," she said,
nodded like an obedient side character in her
even know what we were printing. Assignmen
probably. Or a government form. I would've
grocery list if she asked. Hell, I did once.

That moment felt like something out of a drea
where nothing made sense, but you didn't wa
up. Her eyes, fierce and distracted, pulled me
following her not just to the printer, but into
mess of emotions I hadn't signed up for.

And that's when I realized—somewhere betw
paper jam and my mental breakdown—I wasn
observing anymore. I was in it. The so-called
Investigator had become the first suspect in h
emotional case.

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## Chapter 1 – Silent Investigator

Of course, I wasn't supposed to feel anything.

supposed to be the observer, the quiet one. T
notices everything but says nothing. The one
mental footnotes about people's weird behavi
quietly laughs about it while pretending to st
I have a friend. He lives exclusively in my hea
pays rent. Eats all my thoughts. His name is M
He's my delusion, my decision-maker, my em
arsonist, and the self-appointed CEO of Bad T
there's a mess, chances are Mr. K either made
encouraged it, or is currently narrating it with
drama.
So this was the first day of college. Postgrad,
stood at the entrance of my block, staring up
was the set of a psychological thriller.
"This is the place you've got to survive for tw
years," I whispered to myself.
Mr. K didn't flinch.
> "You're Da Vinci, macha. Don't worry," he
overly confident, shoulder-tap voice of his—t
usually gets me into trouble disguised as adve
And off I went, into the lion's den: the entran
hall. My hands clutching a roll of art supplies
about to paint my own destiny. Or at least no
day.
Then came the prompt:
"A girl and her mother playing in the rain—b

mother is scolding her."
Piece of cake, right?
"This is your jam, bro. This is literally you in
form," Mr. K whispered with unnecessary swa
So I started sketching. Lines flowing. Brain fo
Heart pretending to be calm.
That's when she walked in.
Late. Like a film heroine making her entrance
motion.
She had eyeliner so sharp it could have sliced
Her dress was a color I still can't name but w
forget. She walked in like she'd done this a hu
times—and then sat down like a tornado in a
And then…
She looked around.
She didn't have a pencil.
Mr. K nearly passed out.
"WHO comes to an art entrance exam withou
This is pure chaos. I love it. She's insane. We'
She turned to me, smiled—smiled, I tell you—
"Hey… do you have an extra pencil?"
I handed it over like it was my heart.
She laughed. Polite. Casual. Like she hadn't ju
circuited my emotional wiring.
Mr. K?
Silent.

For once.
Just quietly screaming in the background.
And that… was the beginning of the delusion

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Chapter 2 - Idk why she's making me laugh

After the entrance exam chaos and the pencil
college officially began. Day two rolled in lik
dream that smelled faintly of whiteboard mar
hostel food.
New professors. New subjects. New humans n
awkward eye contact during roll call.
I ended up sitting next to this one guy. He sta
to me like we'd known each other in a past li
casual, very unbothered.
Mr. K leaned in and whispered,
"He's just like you, bro. Very stupid. You're g
along just fine."
And just like that, I had a friend.
But then—I found out something wild.
This guy, this so-called friendly sidekick, wen
submitted our group assignment solo.
Without telling me.
We had talked about submitting it together, h
like a nerdy Thelma and Louise.
I asked him, "Bro… what?"
And he goes,

“Nevermind. I'm like this. I can't ignore deadl

Mr. K clapped in the background like a sarcas
mom.
“Wow. What a legend. Loyalty? Zero. But dea
discipline? 10/10.”
Then came the unexpected bonus pack:
Two crazy new friends.
Loud. Dramatic. Completely unfiltered.
And her. The girl who kept calling my name l
clock with a crush:
“Rishi! Rishi! Come sit in the front with me!”

I was busy, mind you—deep in the trenches o
every person’s head like a yearbook criminal
she wouldn't stop. Her voice was new, unfam
some reason, comforting.
Mr. K peeked out like a confused raccoon.
“Who’s this now? Is she... trying to boost you
esteem? Is this a setup?”
But I liked her vibe.
So I went. I sat in the front.
And entered her chaotic friend group like an
guest star in a sitcom:
The nonstop talker who says things like “I do
but listen to this…”

The problem generator who lives for drama a
speed dial.
The one who called me, watching me like a d
observing a suspect and just laughing.
Mr. K screamed,
“WHAT. IN THE WORLD. IS THIS GROUP. LO
HAVE MERCY.”
But secretly?
I loved it.
This week?
Was fun.
Chapter 3 – Madness arrived
Then there was this guy who sat next to me—
And I swear, he talked exactly like me.
Same expressions. Same nonsense. Same reac
professors acting like they're on TED Talk sta
I turned to Mr. K, wide-eyed.
“Bro… why is this guy literally me?”
And Mr. K, sipping imaginary coffee, smirked
“You’ve found your frequency, macha. Wavel
match confirmed.”
I loved hanging out with him. It felt like I wa
having a conversation with someone who und
the weird chaos that lives rent-free in my hea
And then came her.
Now—she’s not exactly funny. Not in the usu

comedy kind of way.
But she's seriously funny. Like accidentally hi
Unintentionally comedic. She'd say the most
things with a straight face and I'd just... lose
Mr. K blinked.
"How can someone be both funny and not fu
same time? This girl's a paradox."
She and I started walking to the railway stati
after class.
She talked a lot. Like a podcast with no pause
She had these thoughts—so different from mi
opposite takes on life, people, movies, food—
Mr. K was baffled.
"She's absurd. Like full-blown upside-down lo
But I liked her.
She made the after-class walk feel like an alte
universe.
And somehow, even with all the differences,
It made sense.
In that nonsense sort of way.
The front row girl gang?
Oh my god. They were like walking, talking,
chaos.
Every day, it was like sitting in the front row
show that had zero scripts and no commercia
They couldn't stop talking. Ever. Even if the p

was right there—explaining something about
or deadlines or whatever—we were all gettin
giggles and gossip.
Mr. K leaned back with invisible sunglasses o
in:
“Macha, I like them. They’re like radios that
up. Top-tier entertainment.”
And me? I loved it.
Every day, I took selfies with them—making
pulling silly poses, immortalizing our nonsen
It was like a scrapbook of madness I didn’t kn
needed.
Then there was her.
Not the girl who made me laugh for no reaso
This one was different. The unreachable type
If college had leagues, she was several above
A total nerd—but not the quiet kind.
The scary kind. The kind who could talk in fr
class like she owned the mic and the syllabus
Smart. Funny. Too energetic.
Like if caffeine had a human form and a perfe
attendance record.
Mr. K froze the moment she walked up to spe
“Who is she? Why is she touching your inner
this? You better calm down, bro. This is not y
Abort.”

But I couldn’t. I watched her talk like she was
spells with her words.
Somewhere in between the unstoppable girl g
buddy who mirrored my thoughts, the parad
walked me to the station, and the girl who m
look like performance art...
I realized:
This was my gang now.
My rollercoaster.
My emotional buffet with extra spice.
And Mr. K? He just whispered:
“I love this crazy mess. Let’s keep riding it til

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Chapter 4 – Accidentally, entirely her’s.
Her name was Nastenka, the nerd, the out of
girl, idk why I changed routines suddenly for
somethings not working,
Mr k was just sleeping at the time, chilling, n
about anything.
The first day she asked me...
We came so early....also I didn't ate my break
meet at thr nearby cafe and I'll finish my brea
we'll go at the correct time... And I don't know
loved that...
After a week that became a routine like we re
cafe every morning at 6 am and I'm even mak

sandwiches just for her....and we'll order a co
tea ....nas was the tea lover and I love coffee.
who the hell drinks tea and shell ask is huma
coffee and we'll chat and we'll go....
Mr k often ask me you everyday going to clas
this time you wake up early, making sandwic
what is this?
But I don't know why I loved evert moment w
the coffee shop she drinks the cofee like a bal
slowly and I would watch her all day drinkin
Mrk said alright alright don't look intensely i
mess at last.
But I didn't care at all
The way she's talking texting on her phone, e
neutral expression.
When she's angry, the smile at the end of her
my god. Thats heavenly way to get cursed....
The way she ask me everyday can we take a s
just laugh and do whatever she says...
And everyday at the end of the class I would
her to her bus stand and wait and I'll go after
She daily waving me byeeeee hands even wh
going beyond the horizon...
When o walk alone after I leave her she sends
message after that...
Mr k always say just 2 years bruh. Stfu and g

And I dk I would love to walk with her when
leaving..
And I bought her gifts first time when I went
without her....I loved her reaction...like it's ju
rishi but my translations in delusions are Tha
rishi..for this.
Chapter 5 - When the last bus came.
Huhh....
I don’t know when she started to disappear.
Maybe the moment she moved to the hostel.
Maybe the moment the walks to the bus stop
being ours.
She changed rooms. And with that—everythi
No more coffee mornings.
No more crossing the road with reckless joke
No more pretending the world was small eno
in forever.
The goodbye wasn’t dramatic. It never is.
Just a simple wave at the intersection—left fo
station, right for her hostel.
She said bye. I wanted to walk her. Just once
Just once more.
Annoy her.
Poke her shoulder.
Say something dumb just to make her glare.
Maybe she hated it.

But I didn't know how to love quietly.
There was this one day—last time I really lau
She was balancing her phone on her head wh
charged. Wire dangling like a trap.
I said, "The phone will deffo fall on your hea
She rolled her eyes. "Moodu," she muttered—
And then the phone fell. Right on her forehea
She was stunned. Nearly cried.
I asked, "Is it hurting?"
She didn't answer. Just stared.
Then she threw her laptop bag at me.
I crouched and laughed like an idiot.
Mr. K said, "She's insane, bruh."
And I said, "Yeah, but she's the kind of insan
forever."
Now… it's quiet.
Home.
No footsteps beside mine. No teasing, no argu
Just old walls. Familiar. Cozy. But lonelier th
to be.
I don't expect anyone to ask me to be their fr
anymore.
But I don't regret any of it.
Not the laughter.
Not the glares.
Not the silence that followed.

She faded.
Even the closest ones do.
And somehow, I knew she would.
Chapter 6 - where I thought I'd fall, they caug
When the one I thought was the protagonist f
my story, something strange happened. I met
crazy people—right before post-grad ended. U
loud, lovable people. The kind you don't expe
become part of your plot, but somehow sneak
pages anyway.
Ree, the Crazy Talker
She was supposed to be her sidekick. Just bac
noise. Then we ended up stranded together at
station, and I realized—oh no, she's definitely
crazy in the way that clicks with my kind of c
first, I hated how she saw the world. Too loud
Too her. But slowly, I saw the things in her th
thought I'd notice. Things I needed. She's lazy
Real lazy. And real wonderful.
The Selfish Guy
I thought he was selfish. Still kinda is. But no
clearer—talkative, goofy, a surprising soft pla
never imagined I'd have a friend like him. A w
contradiction. Somehow, exactly what I need
The Savage Trio
There was this girl who kept dragging me to

the line. The loud one. The bossy one. I used
eyes. Then she made my life matter. The day
“You ignored me,” it broke something in me.
hadn’t meant to. I just… got distracted by sur
was always there, calling me to show up—no
front of the line, but to myself.
And then there’s the crybaby—the indecisive,
emotional, utterly irreplaceable friend I didn’
adore. Every friendship came wrapped in cha
was our chaos.
As post-grad ends, it feels like a curtain fallin
didn’t realize I was starring in. It’s bitterswee
taste of something that lingers—melancholy,
sweet.
And then… the last day.
I walked through the gates of college with no
bitterness. Just a quiet kind of peace. Smiles
I loved. I even got to walk with Nas, all the w
hostel. Slow, quiet. A lovely slow burn of a m
time was stretching itself thin just to let us ha
And yet, the ending still stung. Not because it
but because it had to end.